

WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH

Published Weekly.—\$1.50 per Year, in advance.

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BLUE GRASS BLADE

Founded 1884, and edited by Charles Chilton Moore up to his death, February 7, 1906.

JAMES E. HUGHES, Editor and Publisher

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ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BLUE GRASS BLADE, P. O. Box 393, Lexington, Ky.

Keep straight on.

„Don't get to be a pillar of salt.

If God made priests who made politicians?

Religion too often destroys the hand that helps it.

There is no Fido to bite the army of Freethought soldiers.

Orthodox hearts may be all right but new machinery is needed in the head.

Now we have to struggle with the "grand thaumaturgic faculty of thought" whatever it is.

Although Lexington has a good sized faith factory not many seem to be ordering their theology.

Instead of being a dispenser of charity the church is the champion pauper known in all the long history of mankind.

Why is it that the leaders of the world's greatest thoughts are to be outside the churches and not on the inside? They don't belong there.

Honesty must hold in contempt the jeweled hand of the bigot that would take the last copper from the starving hand of famine and want.

Orthodoxy is the destroyer of human happiness, the perverter of human felicity and the prisoner of all springs of human virtue.

In view of the heartless, unfeeling conduct of the modern church society the noble men and women who have espoused the Freethought cause are determined to free as many others as they are capable from its cruel grasp.

The moment a man of mediocre mind is seized with a fervent desire to know god he joins some foolish church and becomes a phrenetic defender of the foolish faith, grabs a bull whip and without weighing the evidence, he seeks to drive his brethren to the throne of grace and begins to tell just how everything happened to be as it is. This is religion.

Peripatetic priests and perspiring politicians still pretend to play at liberty enlightening the world when they are but indulging in the clamor of Jack Cade and Cagliostro. Lincoln was right. You can't fool the people all the time or we might succeed in persuading some of them to apply the soft pedal to themselves and give us a good, long rest.

Look at the average psalm singer. Size him up. Though he sing until the cows come home and pray till his collar goes limp, though he visit all the sisters once a week and paddle in some baptismal tank until he develop web feet and dorsal fins, though he yawp until ice forms in perdition, he to society is no more than a cracked cymbal in a 10-cent circus, the cube root of a vacuum, a hiatus in a hole, the net product of nothing. These are not the men that make the world move, to arise and hump itself.

If high honor be due those who to escape the wrath of some vengeful god and win an immortal crown take up the cross and labor on with pained and bleeding feet, how much more should be meted to that man who, seeing at the end of life's fitful fever only an ever-dreamless sleep, performs work of real merit, of real human value, even to others more than himself. Of the latter stuff are the men and women made who constitute the great army of Freethinkers. These shrink not from duty because of religious threats or tyranny, but dare and do the right in spite of hell and prophetic forewarn-

ings of the lake of fire. Such was Paine, Girard, and Ingersoll.

It is recorded that certain thieves broke into a certain church and saved a certain congregation from one hour of certain torture by swiping the sermon which the parson had prepared and he had no other. Of course, it was the least valuable, in a commercial sense, of all they managed to get away with, being unable to trade it for cash or to borrow money on it, and to make matters worse they did not the author the doubtful honor of reading it. Had they done so they might have understood what it meant by "flee from the wrath to come." Flee they did from the parson's wrath and they took no chances on getting turned into a pillar of salt.

We have heard and read about the Christian life, the Christian way, the Christian family and the Christian community, but we have just read for the first time of the Christian raiment. It comes from New England where it is said that one, John M. Hubbard, has invented a sort of religious garb which he has designed for the purpose of wearing upon Sundays and other days of religious observance. It is described as a tight-fitting, crimson cassock, with gold buttons. From such a description one would never think its owner and wearer would attract attention, but as he assumes to preach that it is the real Christian raiment by Bible references, we can think of the poor devils in the country who cannot afford to buy the gold buttons and what a devil of a fix they are in to be sure John M. Hubbard should take treatment for the simples.

"The use of cigars, the cigarette and the pipe is a sin," declares Elder Bennett, of the Goshen district of the Northern Indiana Methodist Conference. When religion grows dull and its observance becomes insipid outside attractions are sought for. Prohibition has been one of the principal hobbies and that has been played for all it is worth, the preacher getting everything he could out of the game. Card parties, dance halls, theaters and opera houses, have been held up to scorn because they are now recognized as dangerous business rivals of the Christian joss houses, and that something new might be invented to occupy time and attention, Elder Bennett has hit upon opposing the weed. Just at this season we are having trouble enough in Kentucky concerning tobacco crops, with the night riders and military, so won't somebody please squirt a little tobacco juice in the Elder's ear and beg him to let up.

The press dispatches state that a Frenchman, M. Severin, has created a decided sensation in London by the rendition of "Conscience" which is described as a wordless play. In other words the actor made words to the music and being without the actor had nothing to say. What a blessing, only a majority of our preachers could be taught that simple art and use it in their pulpits every Sunday.

It is reported that an Iowa man is immune from the deadly poison of the rattlesnake and loves to be bit by them just for the fun of it. If men and women could only be made immune against orthodox Christianity it would be worth writing and talking about for they would then escape the evil effects of the deadly poison instilled into their ears from Christian pulpits and they would incline to dwell together more in unity, more at peace with the world and in time learn to become benefactors to the race. Of course, the Blade realizes that some people love to be bit with the orthodox rattler just for the fun of appearing miserable. The Blade cannot see happiness coming that way.

Say! Reader! This is a New Year, and several days have already been spent. Have you turned over that new leaf yet. If not don't do so until you have read this. The Blade wants to double its circulation during this year. You have got twelve months to work in but there is no time like the present. Look through yet list of personal friends and acquaintances. See if there be not one, just one, who would like to take the Blade, or would like to read it if they could get one. Would he not make a good subscriber? You ought to know. The Blade is turning over a new leaf and we are now considering plans that will put the paper on a better footing and prove more acceptable to you. In fact we are going to experiment with it. All the Blade asks that you will allow it to become its own missionary. Send us a list of names of persons whom you believe would probably subscribe to the Blade and we will do the rest. This is a small effort on your part but it will help us.

That literary fund about which we have written has resulted in a fiasco so much the worse. We had hoped that some of our wealthy Freethinkers would manifest enough interest in our Freethought propaganda to enable us to do better, furnish better reading matter, better argument and a better make up. Only a few have promised to subscribe and these never expressed better intentions, thanks be to them. The promised assistance, however, is not sufficient to justify us embarking upon such a plan and incurring additional obligations. As a result we shall not call upon any who have pledged themselves to this leaving the matter open so that if, at any time, a fund is forthcoming, we can go ahead and carry out the plan suggested. The Blade extends its warmest thanks to the faithful few who have so kindly written us on the subject.

For our coming Paine issue to commemorate the anniversary of the birth of that sterling patriot we intend to have an open field and invite all our readers and their friends to contribute

articles on the subject. Let it be a Paine issue in every sense of the word. Paine was for the people and let the people be for Paine. The anniversary of his birth falls upon the 29th day of January. The Paine issue will be printed on the Sunday previous thereto, on the issue bearing date January 30. In order to get your articles to us in time and get them properly printed and distributed they should reach our office not later than January 18 or 19. Now let every friend of Paine and those who love to honor his memory get busy and tell the world what you think about him. The more the merrier.

The Blade has received a very modest complaint that it does not assail Roman Catholicism as an infatuate enemy of the republic. Steady there. Hold on. The Blade has no sectarian preferences where the orthodox Christian religion is concerned. Neither Protestantism or Catholicism are to be judged as political forces it must be by their practices and not according to their professions. As an American citizen, pure and simple, by religion undefined, we place the constitution above all religious creeds and the rights of life above the hopes of death. Protestantism and Catholicism would combine to keep an Ingersoll from being elected to public office and Protestant prejudice is the most dangerous admixture of religion and politics the country has ever known. If the Protestant priesthood could have its way it would transform this republic into one of the most abject and most miserable theocracies in the world, and we are not Catholic either. Catholic or Protestant they are all tarred with the same orthodox brush.

What is the Bible? If there be a deity would it not be far better to assume that he made the religious ideas, implanted it in the mind of his creatures and left it to adapt itself to the law of evolution than to assume the childish theory that he made a robber horde of semi-savages the custodians of all the knowledge which man was permitted to have concerning him and his existence, knowing, as the deity must have done, that they possessed no power to enlighten the technical nations on far continents respecting the laws he said to have given them? The Bible places one class in front of the gate to heaven and sends others along the highway to hell; and if ever a religion shall be born that is to be of human value it must be based upon human ideas and human necessity, not simply desire. When we consider its source the Bible becomes cheap to intelligent minds. As for Christianity, professedly based upon the Bible, it was born of the unclean ooze of miasmic swamps, in the womb of noisome fens. Away with orthodox Christianity and its bibles.

And now we are informed that one of the most potent causes of poverty is overproduction. Not so fast, my masters, it is an incorrect theorem there is no overproduction of anything in the world. There is no superfluous production of anything and never can be such a thing in this world as overproduction. It is under-consumption. The wealth annually produced congests at a comparatively few points instead of flowing into the coffers of its creators. There's the rub. With endless industry and rigid economy the masses cannot evolve out of the mazes of poverty. Fancy labor butting out its own brains on bursting smokehouses and bloated wheat bins. If any man thinks there is an overproduction, let him consider how many of us would refuse to live on the elegant plan of the Rockefeller, the Astors and Vanderbilts, were we able to do so.

CONVERTING INFIDEL EDITORS.

Some time ago we published a communication with comment and answer thereto, from J. O. Smith, of Brownson, Mich., in which we were requested to give an expression of, or to state the reasons why, we are opposed to orthodox Christianity, with the privilege of a reply. This privilege was granted on the condition that the "reply" be couched in intelligent language and not consist altogether of Bible quotations. The reply has not been heard from but J. O. Smith has.

During the past week another communication came from the same source in which we are very politely informed that if we will but submit to his instruction, he, J. O. Smith, is satisfied that he could speedily convince us of our error, as he has succeeded in "convincing other infidels" and "bringing them to Christ and God."

One thing is evident, or at least one of two. Namely, either J. O. Smith does not care to make a reply in intelligent language, minus Bible quotations, or else a copy of the Blade containing that article has never reached him. Wonder if he expects that we are to put him on the free list for the mere privilege of permitting him to use space in an attempt to convert us to "Christ and God" as he has other infidels! As a business proposition we cannot see things in that light. On the other hand he may be afraid to subscribe, because he would naturally want his money's worth and is fearful lest he be converted from "Christ and God" as many others have been before him and will be after him.

The writer says: "God used me to save an infidel editor as far gone as you, for 15 years. Please give me one chance through your paper." We are compelled to admit of serious doubts about the "infidel editor" but the suggestion that he was far gone as we are it is evident that he imagined the Blade was material to work on. Well, while there's life in the old dog, let him have all the chances he wants.

THE SCIENTIFIC TREE.

Those who have watched the progress of modern science during the past century, that is a compara-

tive progress, must stand amazed with its wonderful achievements, its enormous advance, while struck, with almost similar amazement at the stunted religious systems of the world.

Every thinker, every student, knows and realizes that the Christianity of today is not the Christianity of a century back, that while retaining the name of the forms, doctrines have changed, texts have changed and new religious systems have founded upon the broken altars and ruined fane of religions now dead and gone.

To a great extent science has worked these changes. Facts being stubborn things even religious worship had to conform to fact and drift further from theory and guesswork. Science is built upon facts and when facts contradict theories the latter must succumb to the inevitable. Facts are also truths, synonyms, one and the same.

Science brought man from barbarism into civilization. It was science that gave him a weapon with which to conquer the beasts of the field against whom he had to strive and contend for food and later science gave him a fire from which he learned the art of cooking his food. Weapons and fire, were in their day, the greatest inventions in the long history of man and enabled him to take the longest strides in removing him from the brute associations of the past. He could now bring the proud eagle to his feet and he stood master over the animal world. It was not long before man learned how to domesticate animals and when the stone age dawned upon him he acquired the art of cultivating the soil. From this change man no longer subsisted upon roots and raw meat but he was able to produce better food and clothing. Another advance in the march of civilization and a decided improvement upon the condition in which the Christian god had placed him.

Step by step man grew in strength, wisdom and knowledge. From implements of stone he turned to metals and the iron age wrought another wonderful change. He learned the art of extracting from earth's bosom the metals it contained and by smelting them convert them into such articles of both use and beauty as he desired. New theories and laws were found for utilizing light and heat, followed by a rudimentary knowledge made by higher or lower temperature in both, and how heat could be produced by friction. Experiments in copper, iron, alloys, enabled man to invent a mold and design and manufacture articles of use and beauty, utility and ornament.

Later came a delving into the different branches of the natural sciences and theology was completely annihilated. Physics, biology, geology, astronomy, zoology, medicine and therapeutics, all contributed their quota like individual pieces of some intricate mechanism and by their combined effort a new world had come into being, a new man occupied the earth, for he was no longer the slave and sport of the elements, but he was actually their master.

In face of all this there are men who yet proclaim that, unless the editor and subscribers to the Blade decline to enter their sectarian penfold and be measured for a suit of angelic pinfeathers, everlasting punishment will be their doom in a place of torment specially prepared for them. And what does it all point to? Simply this. Had it not been for man's unaided efforts he would have been totally where the orthodox god had placed him. In a condition of savagery and barbarism. Man won in the race for human progress. God lost out.

WHAT IS IN IT?

Too many people stop to ask what they can make out of a certain thing before attempting to understand it.

When a person is moved or actuated by such considerations it is not the right or wrong of the act he considers but how much can self gain by doing or not doing it.

Happy, indeed, is the man who can glide comfortably along with the stream of public opinion, caring not for the direction in which it is moving, where it will land him, so long as he is not required to exert himself or resort to too much effort.

The actual sympathy of such persons cannot extend beyond the narrow confines of a cash box. Christianity is undergoing a rapid degeneration because its professional advocates constantly keep an eye on the salary contract and make careful estimates upon the actual profits that can be made and the ease to be acquired from following his profession in a given locality. Even Christian congregations are compelled to figure upon the expense incurred by belonging to this or that church and these obligations become a sort of standing expense that must be provided for or there is a risk of losing orthodox standing.

While the advocates of Freethought cannot be charged up with any extravagances, for there are none to be found in the movement, yet it is because poverty and too frequent an inability to engage in Freethought propaganda and make a living for those dependent, that deters many from entering the field and those who have entered it, worked and labored in it for years, have been compelled to

desert the ship and take to other means of winning a livelihood.

The comparison to be drawn is that the Christian gives too much and too freely for the support of his creed. Free-thinkers do not help to any great extent, and frequently not enough. The Christian may be led to such acts by a belief in a dividend to be declared in the hereafter, that is, believe that he is actually buying a front seat, up near the throne, and that god almighty has some angel with a book jotting down how much he gives and how frequently he makes a contribution. The Free-thinker has no such incentive, but properly analyzed, a far greater incentive confronts him in that by his efforts the race may be won from priest-craft and superstition whereby a greater happiness may be wrought for all.

Whenever you hear a man or woman ask how much there is in it to do a thing or not to do a thing you may put it down that a supreme selfishness dominates that mind.

Suppose Galileo had asked that question, or that Giordano Bruno had reflected over it when asked to recant! Where would their blessed memories have been today? Suppose Charles Bradlaugh had stopped to find out how much there was in it before waging his great war for the freedom of the British press. Suppose G. W. Foote had entertained similar thoughts before publishing that issue of the Free-thinker which brought on the prosecution, he might have been saved from Holloway jail but posterity would have felt differently towards him. Ingersoll might have been governor of Illinois but for opinion's sake. Take Darwin, Huxley, Tyndale, Spencer, and other great leaders in the world of scientific thought, if they had paused upon the threshold of investigation to ask what was in it their great works would have been altogether lost to the world. Even had Thomas Paine asked himself the question before entering upon that great march for liberty Old Glory might not be yet unfurled to the breeze.

What is there in it? What will people think? These are the great bugaboos in the world of mental liberty. Never mind what people think so long as you know you are right. Never bother about the dollars and cents if you see a duty perform it and don't ask foolish questions.

Under the guidance of shallow selfseekers the ark of the social covenant has been abandoned upon the rock of forgetfulness and men strive to manage matters mundane on a basis of brute selfishness, chasing a foolish rainbow of fatuous utilities and sink deeper into the orthodox bog. Christian charity is too much lauded and too much extolled. The true test of a man's charity is not in what he actually gives, but in that which he reserves for his own use out of a given income. There is neither charity or benevolence or philanthropy in the donations of a Carnegie or a Rockefeller. Both have more than they give. They do not want nor need anything that which they have given.

Don't ask the question but pitch right in and do. What will people say or think? Ignore them and knowing you are right go ahead with the task that duty prescribes for you.

MUCKRAKERS.

Roosevelt is responsible for two expressions that will stick to him so long as his memory shall continue among men.

Muckraker.

Filthy little atheist.

With the latter Free-thought writers of prominence and note have had to deal. It was an uncalculated expression of his personal contempt for a man and a patriot greater than he by far. It was a cheap attempt to play to the ignorant Christian gallery and a bid for the plaudits of the multitude.

The former was used as a cheap attempt at political play and designed for application towards those of an opposite faith or temperament. Since its origin it has been used more or less by political hawk writers and penny-aliners, and strange to say the reading public has well understood the application.

If a man or woman does not agree with you call him or her a muckraker and the answer is looked upon as being complete. No other term is needed. The sum of personal feeling is full.

Some of the daily papers have fallen into the habit of using the term in a general sense and applying it to persons whose tastes in a measure of business or policy agrees not with their own. As a general rule a well-conducted newspaper is but a reflex, or a mirror, in which the community sees itself day by day, and yet there are many of the "yellow" variety that have so little circulation at home, but a large one abroad, because they are not understood at a distance. To be termed a muckraker by such as these would indeed be a compliment. The muckraker is one who is supposed to delve into the seamy sides of life and by various exposes divulge what really ought to be allowed to pass by unnoticed. "Muck" is slang for dirt or trash. The "raker" is her or she who works in it or about it. "Muckraker" is a man or woman who sets to work in or about the dirt or trash, or the useless rubbish of human life.

The Blade is in receipt of a clipping from some newspaper, the name of which is not given, published somewhere in the United States, the letter, or envelope without a letter, bearing it being postmarked Chillicothe, Ohio. The clipping gives a list of those whom its editor is pleased to term muckrakers, and includes the following:

Lincoln Steffens, Charles E. Russell, Cleveland Moffet, rakers of political muck.

Ida Tarbell, Thomas W. Lawson, Samuel Hopkins Adams, rakers of financial, industrial or business muck.

Maxim Gorky, Jack London, Upton St. Clair, literary rakers of social muck.

Edwin Markham, poetic raker of the muck of poverty.

Bugene Higgins, artist muckraker.

From this we are to assume that the men and women named are rakers in and about the muck of politics, finance, industry, social, and artistic, as well as the muck of poverty.

Great, indeed, must be the brain force of the author of that delectable compound, for if there was ever a deliver in or raker of muck that author, or that editor, is the one person above all others who should be dubbed with the title. The Blade does not undertake to defend the persons named from the attack made upon them, feeling that they are all capable of protecting themselves against such an outburst. The argument offered, however, is that any man or woman who sees and understands a human wrong and sets to work to right it must be a muckraker. The political writers thus designated are the safety-valves of our political life, for with a keen insight into governmental monstrosities they expose and explain, thereby forcing a more moral tone, or compelling political tricks to be played more in secret. As to Lawson and his associates, their exposes have done much to bring the nation out of those inevitable dangers that were following in the wake of frenzied finance, while Gorky, and those classed with him, are daily exposing the wrongs humanity is compelled to suffer. Worst of all, indeed, is he who undertakes to hurl an insult at poverty by directing attention to its muck. Poverty is not a crime. It suffers much. Many suffer from it. The causes are not inherent.

It is noticed, however, that the brilliant mind that conceived the article failed to include the religious muckrakers. On this point the Blade calls attention to the fact that nowhere in the world has there existed muckrakers like Parkhurst and Sam Jones. These fairly glory in muck. They sought it and found it, and fluffed it fairly revelled in it. In the name of an offending deity they participated in human sin and shame. This is muckraking with a vengeance, but these are left out of the list because their muckraking was done in the name of religion.

Besides the Bible ought to have been given special mention. Considering the muck it contains it must require considerable raking to find the few morsels of goodness it contains.

After all, we suppose it all depends whose ox is being gored. To a devout Christian the Blade is also a muckraker, and to the Blade that same Christian might be regarded in the same category. It is all a difference of opinion. If a man does not believe as you believe, if he refuses to worship at your shrine, if he declines to vote with you on political issues, denounce him as a muckraker and he is deprived of further argument.

This is why Roosevelt called Thomas Paine a filthy little atheist, and he invented the muckraker and the molyeddle to express his personal contempt for political enemies.

MRS. RICKER ON CLIFFORD GREVE.

Neither Bryan or Roosevelt can be Accounted Truly Great While Believing in Myths. Helping to Build Libraries.

Marilla M. Ricker, the lady lawyer of Dover, New Hampshire, the one woman in all America who has done so much for the cause of education and humanity, without hope or expectation of pecuniary reward, has just contributed to the establishment of a public library at New Durham, an act of which the Boston Herald gives the following notice:—

WOMAN DISCIPLE OF BOB INGERSOLL HELPS TOWN.

Mrs. Ricker, Lawyer, Sends Check, and Will Give Books to Library.


Mrs. Marilla M. Ricker, lawyer, suffragist and disciple of Ingersoll today sent a check for \$50 to Mrs. Sarah Coburn of New Durham, chairman of the committee which is raising funds for the furnishings of the new town hall in that town, which will be dedicated in January.

Mrs. Ricker has agreed to give more money if it is needed to complete the furnishing of the hall, and has also signified her intention of donating to the New Durham town library a complete set of the works of Robert Ingersoll.


It will be recalled that Mrs. Ricker recently wrote a long article in the defense of Paine's memory which was reproduced in the Blade. At all times is she fearless in her expression of truth and never objects to being termed a "disciple of Bob Ingersoll."

Mrs. Ricker has just favored the Blade with a personal communication in which she undertakes to criticize the views expressed by Clifford Greve in his opinions concerning Bryan and Roosevelt, in the following language:—

"I was amazed by the article of Clifford Greve in the November Blade. I want to say here, and I think I can without fear of successful contradiction, that no man in these enlightened days can be a great man or a great leader who believes in myth and miracle. He is either a hypocrite or he has a 'powerfully' weak spot in his head."



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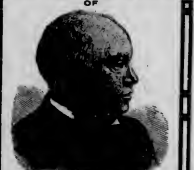
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